

Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed

Coordinated Resource Management and Planning

September 12, 1999

*Ranchers,
farmers, and local
citizens*

*Broadview Water
District*

*Bureau of Land
Management*

Cal-Trans

*California Department
of Water Resources*

*California Department
of Fish and Game*

City of Mendota

*Cooperative
Extension Services*

*Environmental
Protection Agency*

*Firebaugh Canal
Water District*

*Fresno County
Department of
Public Works*

*Natural Resources
Conservation Services*

*Private Clubs and
Organizations*

San Benito County

*San Benito Resource
Conservation District*

*Silver Creek
Drainage District*

*United State
Geological Survey*

*Westlands Water
District*

*Westside Resource
Conservation District*

CALFED
Lester Snow
Executive Director
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Comments concerning the CALFED Process and Funding Criteria for the last PSP.

Dear Mr. Snow:

Over the last two years, I have represented the Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (P/SC CRMP) group at the BDAC Watershed Workgroup meetings in the development of the Watershed Work Plan. As a result, I have been educated on the process that has taken place in the development of the overall plan to repair the Bay-Delta ecosystem, water quality, and water reliability for agriculture, urban and environmental uses. As the results of the February 1999 Proposal for Solicitation Package are being released, I felt it was an appropriate time to formally respond to this entire process.

First, over the last two years, there has been a tremendous effort on behalf of many watershed groups, public agencies and other interested parties to pull together the Watershed Work Plan. The development of this work plan took into consideration all the other common programs, the goals of the overall CALFED program and the needs of the local watershed programs. As a result of this effort, the plan adopted by the Watershed Work Group was one that provides enough background on the current issues, as well as provides enough detail to properly develop a plan of action that addresses water quality and volume concerns. However, very few of the other common program work groups and committees have considered the Watershed perspective in their plans or decisions. This is evident by the continual funding decisions that focus primarily on aquatic species recovery and not upper watershed source areas.

Secondly, the continual degradation of the budget for the Watershed Work Plan indicates a lack of commitment to the watershed program. Over the last two years, the decrease in the budget for the watershed program makes local watershed groups question the true intentions of the CALFED Policy Committee. This view was further supported when the Financial Plan was released and was apparent the Watershed Plan was either not read or not understood. If the CALFED program was serious about solving the problems in the Bay-Delta, then those in decision making positions would attend watershed meetings, and they would ask questions when they were not clear on information.

Thirdly, the lack of communication between the common programs and the decision makers is completely unacceptable. This lack of communication clearly indicates a lack of commitment by the leaders in each of these committees to a solution that will benefit the three effected groups, agriculture, urban and environment. This could be resolved by either attending the watershed meetings, when invited, or holding a quarterly meeting where

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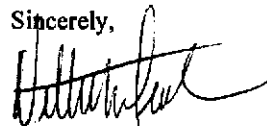
all work groups could discuss the program plans. I do realize there are BDAC meetings open to the public where the workgroup leaders can discuss progress, however this process is clearly not working. Until there is a stronger commitment to resolve the concerns within the entire Bay-Delta watershed, this lack of communication between the common programs and decision makers will continue and worsen. As the lack of communication grows, the interest and involvement of the local watershed groups will decline. As this decline increases, the restoration and improvement to the Bay-Delta issues will decrease and NO ONE will "get better together".

Furthermore, as I asked questions concerning the process the Integration Panel used in the selection of the February 1999 proposals, it was clear that the Panel experienced extreme frustration with the selection criteria established being so restrictive. Some have even inferred that the extremely narrow selection criteria eliminated many of the good projects, leaving me with a question as to the efficiency and effectiveness of the currently funded projects. The CALFED process has so over utilized the facilitation and consensus processes that most of the meetings and decision making has become dysfunctional and non productive.

This local watershed group is terribly disappointed in the lack of progress, the strict exclusive focus of the decision makers, and the lack of commitment to all the groups that were supposed to be represented in this process. We felt it was important to inform you and the CALFED decision makers of the thoughts of a local watershed working group.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the below listed numbers.

Sincerely,



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cc: P/SC CRMP Steering Committee
Directors of CALFED Agencies
Governor Gray Davis